

[18] JUST
RE-PROPOSALS
TO
Humble Proposals.

OR
An impartiall Consideration of, and
Answer unto, the humble Proposals, which
are printed in the name of sundry Learned and Pious Di-
vines, concerning the Engagement which the
Parliament hath ordered to be taken.

Shewing, { *How farre those Proposals are agreeable to Reason,
to Christianity and to Policie.
How the Proposers thereof may receive satisfaction
therein, in all these respects.*

Hereunto are added, The humble Proposals themselves; be-
cause they are not currantly to be found.

Written by JOHN DURY.

I COR. 10. 18. *Not he that commendeth himself, is approved;
but whom the Lord commendeth.*

January 7. 1650.

Imprimatur, JOSEPH CARYL.

LONDON, Printed by J. C. for Richard
Wodenotbe, at the Starre under St. Peters
Church in Cornhill, 1650.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE LIBRARY
OF F. L. RAY
JUNE 1, 1916



JUST
RE-PROPOSALS
To humble
PROPOSALS.

SECT. I.

Concerning the Scope of this Treatise.



It is conceived, that these Proposals containe the strength of all those Scruples; which the consciencious, and hitherto otherwise well-affected party towards the Cause of liberty and Reformation, hath taken up against the Engagement: and because it is neither just nor conscionable, that any matter should be pressed upon the Conscience of any as a Duty, otherwise then by a clear demonstration of the righteousness thereof, and a conviction of the judgement therein: nor can it with any probability be conceived, that the Parliament which with so much Pious zeale and vigour, hath opposed the inroachments of Tyranny hitherto; should now intend any pressures upon any, which are not absolutely necessary, or further then they are unavoidably requisite for common safety; therefore it will be very expedient, to endeavour the removing of these Scruples, as of stumbling-blocks out of the way of conscionable men, whose aime is, to seek Peace and Unity in the Truth; and to offer by a just Re-proposal, and more faithfull Representation of matters, some equitable satisfaction to these humble Proposals.

*The occasion
and inducement
to write
this Treatise.*

*The Scope
thereof.*

*The things to
be handled
therein.*

And to this effect two things shall be weighed without prejudice, and taken into serious consideration: First, what strength of Reason, and strain of Christianity is in these Proposals. Secondly, what way may be followed, to bring the mindes of these Proposers into a quiet frame, by the performance of these Duties which they themselves acknowledge to be just, and which to the State will undoubtedly give satisfaction.

SECT. II.

*The Summe and Substance of the Proposals briefly,
and in order.*

THe Ministers who have made these Proposals, represent first themselves unto us; and then their scruples concerning the Engagement, for which they desire to be excused from the Subscription thereof.

*In the Propo-
sals.*

SECT. I.

They represent themselves in reference to that which is past, to that which is present, and to that which is their future resolution. In reference to things past, they have faithfully served the Parliament; they have suffered for the cause thereof in the pursuance of just liberty and reformation; and they have adhered to their first Principles unto this day.

In reference to things present, they are peaceable and obedient to the Lawes of the Nation; they endeavour with meeknesse and humility to preserve their inward peace, and outward safety; and they finde themselves straightned in conscience upon the case of the present Engagement.

In reference to future Resolutions, they declare that they will behave themselves according to these following Positions.

SECT. 2.

1. That although they hold themselves still bound by their former solemn Covenant and Engagements; yet that they are also convinced, that it is necessary some Civil Government should be maintained in the Land.

2. That they count it agreeable to the will of God, to the light of nature, to the practise of all Christians, to their own principles, and to their former Engagements; to own the char-

ges of Government, which Gods providence brings upon a Nation; when he disables one, and enables another Government to afford protection to the people thereof.

3. That their owning of the Government will be by living quietly and peaceably in their places and callings under it; and by submitting to such things as are imposed upon, or required of them by the Powers which are in actual possession; being things in themselves lawfull, & necessary for the preservation of themselves and others.

4. That all this may be done without disputing the right and title of those who are in place of Magistracy over them.

In these things they propose themselves unto us; that we may know what they are, and what their sense is of the present Government, and the subjection due thereunto.

Then in the second place, they propose also what their scruples are, concerning a subscription to the Engagement, which are of four sorts. viz. 1. Of that which the words in themselves seem to imply & import. 2. Of that where they relate to the violating of former Engagements. 3. Of that which is a matter of generall scandall and offence. 4. Of that which may become a snare unto the Subjects, and a prejudice unto the Rulers themselves.

Señ. 3.

Concerning the sense of the words, they scruple at them because they seem to import (say they) things not to be assented unto. As

1. An Approbation of the present establishment as effected by a full and free Authority.

2. A Ratification and consent of the people unto the Authority.

3. An Obligation to act, at all times, in all places and capacities to the promoting and strengthening of the Authority.

Concerning the violation of their former Oathes and Engagements; they declare from the words thereof, and the manner of taking the same; that such an awfull impression remains upon their conscience thereby, that except the consistency of the Engagement be made unquestionably clear, with the Solemn League and Covenant; that to enter into it will be utterly unlawfull unto them.

Señ. 4.

Concerning the matter of Scandall; they say that the taking

Señ. 5.

Sect. 5.

of the Engagement being lookt upon, as an infringement of former Oaths, will blast the whole reputation of their persons, and of their Ministry, and reflect with more disadvantage upon the Gospel, then bring advantage to the State: for which cause, they cannot yield to a Subscription thereof: till either by a solemn Debate about it (as of the Covenant) or otherwise; the Scruples of their Conscience be taken away.

Sect. 6.

Concerning the snare laid by Superiours before their Subjects; and the prejudice redounding from thence upon the Government it self; it is not offered as a Scruple, but rather as a warning to those that are in Power; that they should not imitate the Episcopall severity and persecution in King James his dayes, and in later times, whereby they laid the foundations of ensuing evils to themselves and their people: and that they should not act against their professed Principles, in having no respect unto tender Consciences.

Sect. 7.

From all which premisses, they inferre a conclusion by way of supplication, put up to those that are in present Power, that they may not be compelled, either to draw reproach upon Religion, and vilifie the Reputation of their Ministry, or to suffer so high a penalty, as to be out-lawed of their Birth-right for not subscribing the Engagement.

Sect. 8.

S E C T. III.

What strength of Reason is to be found in the matter of these Proposals, to draw on their conclusion,

The main conclusion of safety under your protection; although we subscribe not the Engagement, as you require us to do.

THe conclusion, which the Proposers inferre upon these Proposals, is this; We beseech you constraine us not to take the Engagement by any punishment; but suffer us to be in the Engagement, as you require us to do.

If the rationall ground of this demand be inquired into, it will be found to stand in the arguments, which make good these three assertions.

1. That

1. That we ought not to subscribe the Engagement.
2. That you ought not to punish us for non-subscription.
3. That we ought to have our birth-right, which is the benefit of the Laws of the Nation, and your protection to that effect, though we subscribe not.

And three Branches of ii.

If the Reason of the first assertion be asked, viz. Why ought you to subscribe the Engagement?

The Answer will be this; because we are strengthened in Conscience, upon the Cases incident to the Engagement, and cannot subscribe it without doubting; which to do, in us would be sin by the Apostles Rule, *Rom. 14.*

The Arguments proving the first Branch.

What is the cause of your doubting?

The cause of our doubting is, 1. The sense of the Engagement importing things greatly different from that, which we conceive to be our duty in respect of the present establishment. 2. The seeming violation of our former Oaths. 3. And the matter of grievous scandal, which will be given to all sorts of people, against the Gospel and our persons and ministry therein, if we be counted perjured in our former Oaths; which rather then to suffer, and to make the glorying of our Ministry void, we should resolve to dye.

For all which reasons (say they) we ought not to subscribe this Engagement; because to our thought, these are the consequences of the sense implied therein; nor can these inconveniences as to us be removed, except the consistency of this Engagement with the former Oaths, be made unquestionably evident.

If the Reason of the second assertion be asked of them, viz. Why the Rulers of the State ought not to punish them for non-subscription? The Answer will be this; because Governours though in highest Authority, are bound to avoid the laying of snares and stumbling-blocks, in the way of their brethren; and if these that are over us now, should do as our former Governours did, to impose ensnaring Oaths upon godly people, and enforce their subscriptions thereunto; they may by that meanes the beginning of their Government, lay the unhappy foundations of ensuing troubles, to themselves and thir people; as King James and Charles and the Bishops in former times have done.

And

And then another reason why the Subscription ought not to be enforced with a punishment; is because the professed Principles and resolutions of these that are in present power are to have respect to tender consciences, which in this case would not be regarded; if without considerations of these scruples, a punishment should be inflicted upon the non-subscribers of the Engagement.

And if it be objected: but what assurance can the Governours of the State have of the non-subscribers peaceable conversation? The Answer is.

1. That the many years experience of the good behaviour, and faithfull service of the Non-subscribers ought to be taken as a better security for their peaceable disposition, then a fained subscription which many yield unto.

2. That they plead for a forbearance from Subscription only, till by a solemne debate, or otherwise; their conscience shall be cleared of their important scruples.

If lastly, the reason of the third assertion be asked. Why ought you to have the benefit of the Law, and our protection to that effect, though you subscribe not to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth? The Answer will be this.

1. Because we have been faithfull all along to the Parliament, till now of late these stumbling-blocks are come in our way.

2. Because we have been sufferers with you, and as much as any in the cause of liberty and Reformation.

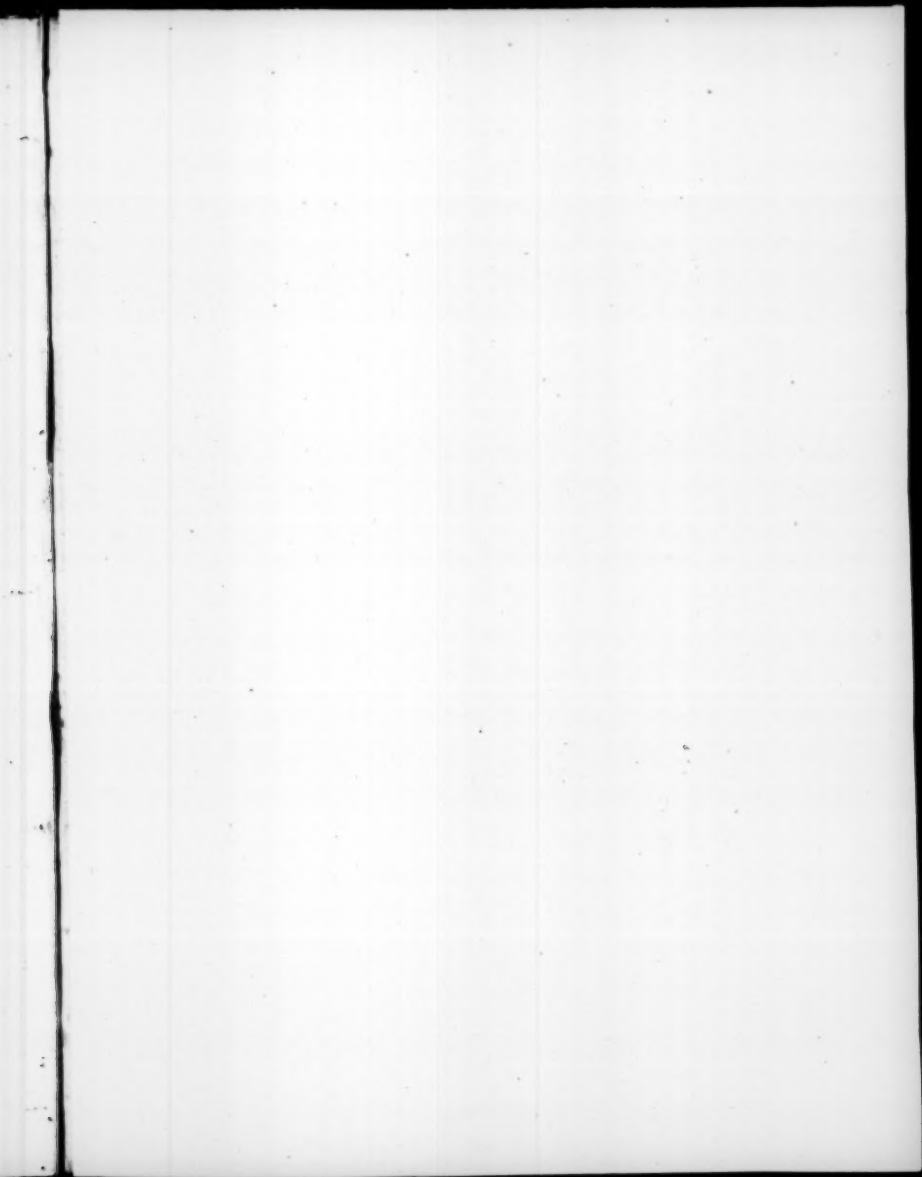
3. Because we adhere still to our first principles upon which you did undertake to give us protection.

4. Because we do promise to maintain the Peace of the Nation, and to pay obedience to the Lawes thereof, whereof we crave the benefit.

5. And because notwithstanding all our former Oaths and Engagements; yet we acknowledge not onely the necessity of a civil Government in generall, for the preservation of humane society, and the prevention of outrages which wicked men unrestrained would do to those that are peaceable; but we consider also in particular, this Government which Gods providence hath set up over us, to be that under which we ought to live quietly and peaceably in our Callings; and to which we will submit in

all

The Arguments proving the third Branch.





all things lawfull and necessary for common safety, without disputing the Right and Title, by which it standeth; and seeing this is the duty, which we are willing to performe; we crave the protection due to such as behave themselves after this manner, although we subscribe not that Engagement, which we conceive is greatly different from the tenor of these duties.

This may be conceived to be the full strength and Rationality of their Plea: whertunto what by way of answer may be said; shall afterwards distinctly appear in the Re-proposals, and in the discovery of the way of satisfaction, to be given hereunto.

SECT. IV.

What the straine of Christianity is, which in the manner of the Proposall is followed.

THe manner and way of proposing these matters, as to Christianity seemes without offence; the expressions being humble, modest, proper and grave; the point of scruple solicited, as to the rous, open and plain: and the matter of their professed Resolution, without vanity or presumption, sad and serious, and although the Title Page, (if it be supposed that the Proposers of these doubts were also the Publishers thereof; and that the Title Page was appointed by them to be made as it is) may seeme to contain something contradictory to the Proposals themselves; something unconformable to Christianity, and something offensive to the superiour Powers, which governe us at present; yet it is more sutable to charity, to think that some inconsiderate Zealot; rather then any considerable company of learned and pious Ministers of the Gospel, was the Publisher thereof, and the Author of the Title Page; for it is not likely, that any true Ministers of Christ in a matter of such concernment, whiles they pretend to humility in their Proposals; would at the publishing thereof, claime to themselves the high Titles, of Learned and of the Divine: then which nothing almost could be counted more presumptuous in them, nor could any thing be found more inju-

nions to wound the Authority of their Rulers withall; then to brand their publick Consultations; and the designs which they have for common safety; with the Character which is given in *Psal. 64. 5.* to persecuting wicked Atheists, *viz. That they commune of laying of Snares privily.*

But if any of themselves should have put forth these their own Proposals; with these high commendations of themselves; and with so much despire against their Superiours, to whom they seeme willing to be humble suitors for a favour; then it may be judged not onely indiscretion and vanity; but malicious Hypocrisie (even against the very matter and scope of their own Proposals) in him (whosoever he is) that hath thus done it. For if this stinging expression (*that they commune of laying of Snares privily*) be the true meaning of the Proposers of these matters; and their positive judgement of the way of those to whom they offer their Proposals; it is apparent, that by the publishing thereof, they have none other aime, but under a faire pretence of Reason and Humility; to commend themselves unto the discontented multitude, as learned and pious Divines; and under that notion, to foment in the popular weak apprehensions, the plausible prejudices, which the change of publick affaires hath begotten against the persons and the proceedings of their Governours: which to cover, strengthen, and insinuate under a Cloak of Religiousness, and a colour of straitness of Conscience, is as far from the truth of Christianity, as that which to God and Men is most abominable and hatefull.

It ought therefore to be far from our thoughts, to suspect that any pious Ministers of *Jesus Christ* (who will one day reveale the secrets of all hearts) should be necessary to any such contrivance; but how far the Publisher may be guilty thereof, and what a prejudice he hath cast thereby upon the Proposals themselves, and what a jealousy he hath raised against the single aime and Christian intent thereof, is to be left unto his own Conscience to be weighed in the presence of God. It shall no way in the least degree forestall my judgement in the consideration of the matters themselves by way of Re-proposals; nor my affection in the manner of representing the same to find a way of satisfaction thereunto.

What those who have subscribed the Engagement, may justly Re-propose unto these Proposals.

THE Ministers throughout this Nation, who have judiciously and conscientiously, as a matter of duty taken the Engagement, may justly represent and Re-propose to those, who seeme offended at them for so doing, this which followeth; somewhat in imitation of their own stile, and in Answer to these Proposals.

We Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who have all of us from the beginning, sought faithfully the Common good of the Nation, and served therein the Parliament, for the pursuance of the necessary ends of just Liberty and Reformation; and have suffered heretofore many grievous things, in our Names and Estates from the common enemy; and are now (especially such of us as are posted up) like to become sufferers of the like or worse things from our Brethren, and friends hereafter. Yet to this day we do constantly adhere to our first Principles; and are not staggered, either in resolutions or endeavours, to maintaine in our places and stations the Peace of this Nation, and to pay obedience to the Laws thereof. We conceive it our Duty in such a time as this, by all wayes of justice, of civillnesse, and of Christian freedom with humility; to preserve our inward Peace and outward safety, by keeping a good Conscience, in the case of the present Engagement; which we being required to take, and to subscribe could not refuse to do, as finding our selves obliged thereunto, as to a Duty whereof we can give this rationall account to all that shall desire to know, what our grounds are for doing the same.

First, We have taken and subscribed this Engagement; because we hold our selves still bound, by our former solemn Covenants and Engagements; (as taken by us in that sense, which their expresse words do undoubtedly declare; which is most clearly suitable to their main ends of publick Peace and Safety; and wherein it is at this time possible and lawfull for us to observe them)

Who the subscribers of the Engagement are.

The grounds and inducements of their subscription to the Engagement.

1. Because the former Engagements obligeth us to uphold the foundation of Civill Government.

to uphold the grounds of Civill Government in this Land; for the preservation of humane society, and prevention of all those evils, which the outrages of wicked men unrestrained would produce therein; which is the whole effect of this Engagement.

2. Because God hath altered by an extraordinary way, the Government of this State, from a Kingdom to a Commonwealth, Whereunto obedience is due.

Secondly, Upon mature deliberation we did perceive; that the wise and holy Providence of God, (whose judgements are unsearchable, and wayes past finding out) hath at this time against and beyond all mens former thoughts and expectations, shaken the foundations of this State, as it was a Kingdom, and disabled that way of Government and all that depends thereon, from affording any protection and preservation to any of the Inhabitants of this Land; and hath inabled another forme of Government to afford it; Wherefore we did conclude from the sight of nature; from the judgement of the Learned; from the practise of Christians in former ages; from our own Principles; and from our former Engagements; that it was the will of God, we should quietly and peaceably set our selves in our places and callings, to live under this Government; and to submit to it, in such things as are imposed upon, or required of us, by the Powers which are in actual possession; being things in themselves lawfull and necessary, or expedient to the preservation of our selves and others.

3. Because obedience is due to the publick power, without disputing their title.

Thirdly, because although we found others making a question of the way, how those who govern at present are come to the helme; yet we conceived that in this case of the Engagement, we were bound without disputing the right or title of those that are in place of Magistracy; to declare our willingness to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth of this Nation, which now doth stand without a King, and House of Lords: because we found this clear duty included in the obvious sense thereof.

4. Because the words of the Engagement are not to be otherwise interpreted as they contain a clear duty.

Fourthly, because we clearly conceive, that there is no difference at all between the submission which the Authors of the Proposals themselves rightly acknowledge to be due to the Powers, which are in actual possession, and that which is required by the subscription to this Engagement: for seeing the expresse words of the Engagement give no ground, to interpret the

the Act of subscription, beyond that which is a clear and known duty: therefore we think it not (as to our Consciences) warrantable to interpret it otherwise; but we rather think it contrary to a known duty, to make of a thing in it self lawful and necessary at this time, any scrupulous interpretation beyond what the words import; or to suspend obedience from a duty, upon the conjecture of something which may be thought undutiful, when that which is to our Conscience a known duty is apparent: Upon which ground we declare, that we trouble not our selves, nor do we think it lawfull to stagger others in their thoughts; with the inferences which the Proposers make upon the Subscription of the Engagement, with Reference to these

*And the Proposers interpretation of the Engagement is manifestly un-
dusifull.*

Queries.

As how far it doth imply an approbation of the manner of the present Establishment; Whether as effected by a full and free Authority yea or no? whether yea or no, it doth imply an active Concurrence, and a ratifying consent of the People thereunto, further then what hath been already acknowledged to be due to the Powers in actual possession; by all that are in subjection under them, and depend upon their protection? and whether yea or no, and how far it fastens an obligation to act to the strengthening and promoting of the Government, which is at present, or may be hereafter established by the advantage of possible power? we say, that to trouble our own, or other mens weaker Consciences, with these or such like doubtfull Conjectures to colour the suspension of our own, or occasion the averſion of other mens affections from yielding obedience to a clear and confessed duty, is not onely preposterous and contrary to the aime of healing breaches, and of advancing a publick good in this time of distraction; but inconsistent (as to our reason) with the obvious meaning of the words, which are to be subscribed, and disagreeing (as to our affections) with the Charity due, no lesse to superiours, then to other men, which is not to think evil when good may be thought of them. And lastly, it is opposite (as to our spirits) unto that wisdom which is from above (the Rule of our walking) teaching us, to have pure and peaceable thoughts in all our actions, to perform duties in Godly simplicity, and without worldly wisdom; to be

Reasons why none should interpret the Engagement as the Proposers do.

1 Cor. 13. 5.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

7 am. 3. 17.

gentle and easily intreated, to do good works without partial scrupulosity, and without hypocrisie.

And upon these principles of true wisdom (which we humbly conceive are not laid to heart, by our Brethren in the third Paragraph of their Proposals) we professedly wave all those scruples and the stumbling-blocks, which they have laid to themselves, and wherewith they have puzzled others, upon this clear Account; that whenever the consideration of these things, which are said to be implied in the Subscription (which we see not) shall come before us, to be circumstantially considered for the edification of others, or the clearing of our own way; we then shall be most ready to declare our sence therein, according to known principles and the circumstances, which God shall offer; but in the mean time we think it answerable to the Duty of Christianity, that we should acquiesce in this plain and generall Resolution; that whatsoever hereafter shall appear to us in any of these doubtfull Cases to be a truth, or a duty; to be asserted or performed, for the good of the Common-wealth (under what forme, or without what forme soever we find it established) we shall hold forth the same freely in word and deed towards all, behaving our selves therein accordingly in a peaceable manner. Because to do otherwise, we think it so far from following a known Rule of Christianity in uprightness and simplicity, that it tends to nothing else but a prejudicate forestallment of our own and other mens thoughts, by the laying of snares and stumbling-blocks before them.

The thing then which we re-propose to our Brethren is this.

An Answer
to the 3. Sect.
of the Propo-
sals, by Way
of Re-proposal.

That as we ingenuously conceive, there is no difference at all between the things which they themselves have mentioned to be duties of Subjects to Superiours, and the Subscription required by the present Authority to the obvious sence of the Engagement: So we say to that which they call a difference, that notwithstanding this Subscription, it is free for us in Conscience to think differently of the manner of the Establishment, according to that which our judgement and light doth or shall dictate unto us in reference to changeable circumstances, if onely at all times, and in all circumstances however changeable; we engage

our

our truth and faithfulness towards the publick good of the Common-wealth under the same: whence we do acknowledge, that upon this Engagement these consequences will follow, as to our Consciences.

First, That we are bound to approve of the present establishment, so far as the manifestation of our truth and faithfulness to the Common-wealth, doth oblige us in our places to follow quietly our own Callings, whether the Authority over us be full and free or no.

Secondly, That we ought not to suspend and denie our active concurrence and ratifying consent to any thing which in the present establishment shall be offered and found lawfull and necessary for common safety; being offered to us by the Authority which is, especially because it is declared, that the Originall of all just power is in the People: therefore conceiving that our consent is required hereunto, (as being some of the People) we judge it our duty in this sense to give it; least we become accessary to the causes of disturbing our present peace or future settlement.

Thirdly, That we ought to be obliged in things lawfull, necessary and expedient for common safety to act at all times, in all places and capacities, to the promoting and strengthening of the Establishment which Gods providence hath set over us, and he hath enabled to afford us just protection.

And seeing by this Engagement, we think not our selves bound up by any words exprest therein; to the particulars: (*Of a full and free Authority; of the consent of the people; and of the strengthening of another establishment, which may set it self up, &c.*) implied and mentioned in the Proposals: but meane to declare by our subscription, thus farre only as we have said, our approbation of, our ratifying consent unto, and our obligation towards the present establishment: therefore we conceive not that we do violate any of our former Oaths, Protestations or Re-proposalls, solemn League and Covenant, whereunto by the former Com-mands of Parliament we actually were, or implicitey could be obliged. But we remember very well, and consider concerning the Covenant; both the time when, and the manner how, and the matter whereunto we were engaged by it; and the sense

sense wherein we then took it; and the asseverations that we should never be drawn from it by any terror or combination whatsoever; and the durable obligation brought upon our selves by it, even all the dayes of our life; and the considerations which we had before our eyes in the taking of it; namely, the Glory of God in the first place; the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the second place; & the happiness of the King, and his Posterity, as subordinate, and in order thereunto (by the liberties of the Nation preserved) in the third place; all which things, as we did formerly, so we do still duly consider: and find by the changeableness of publick affaires upon circumstances, which Gods providence hath ordered for judgement over some, and for mercy towards others; and by the unsuitableness of the late Kings wayes with the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the inconsistency of his course with the publick welfare of this Nation: that the present frame of the State which now is, though different from what then was, hath not been set up by any breach of Covenant: and that the Engagement wherein to we are entered, to be true and faithful to this Common-wealth, as it now is (viz.) established without a King, and House of Lords, hath nothing at all inconsistent with the former Engagements; or doth give us the least cause to carry about with us a conscience (as to these things) trembling and doubtfull, because we finde our selves free from all guilt of the least intention of violating any former promises, in things which are possible and lawfull to be done by us in our places; which were unalterable conditions of all humane promises, at all times presupposed and implied therein.

*Relating to
the parity of
reason, said to
be between
the Engage-
ments to King
and Lords,
without Com-
mons, and to
the Commons
without King
and Lords.*

Nor is there now (to our understanding) any parity of reason; in that which we at this time do, to that which would have been if we had done the like in time past: for although it would have been undoubtedly inconsistent with our Covenant at that time; when King, Lords and Commons made up a Parliament, to have subscribed any Engagement to the King & Lords (if it should by their Agreement & Authority have been required of us) without the Commons of England, because the Covenant did expressly subordinate the relation which we had to the King and Lords, unto the relation which we had to the Common-wealth, yet now it can-

not be understood to be inconsistent with the tenor thereof (whether there is no King nor House of Lords in being) to be without them engaged to the Common-wealth: because we never understood our selves otherwise engaged, nor could we justly by any Covenant or Oath whatsoever be otherwise engaged to them; but in order to the Common-wealth, and as they were true and faithfull to the same. Therefore there is no parity of reason in that, which then would have been to that which now is; neither in respect of the fundamentall relation of being equally engaged to them, and to the Common-wealth: nor in respect of the comparative relation, in cases of division and opposition, which was our condition a while ago: nor in respect of the present circumstances of our establishment, wherein there is none other Power and Authority visible, but that of the Commons in Parliament, as Representatives to that Common-wealth; to which at all times, in all cases and capacities, we finde our selves undoubtedly obliged to be true and faithfull; that is, to say, willing and active to procure the Peace, the Safety, the Plenty, and the Welfare of this Nationall Society, in a Parliamentary way, whether it be with, or without a King and House of Lords: nor can any just desire of the personall prosperity of a man capable of being on a Throne, or of men called Lords; (which yet we do not wish any should be deprived of in what is their just due) be justly laid in the ballance by us, with that faithfulness which we owe to the whole Common-wealth: nor can the present want of them, or any thing which they can claim justly, prejudice the truth of our affection, towards the publick weale of the Nation in a way without them, no more then their present heretofore did take us off from aiming at the same publick weale of the Nation, by the way wherein they formerly stood. There can be here fore no parity of reason found, why the Engagement to the one should sway with us as much as to the other, although the King and Lords-House were in being, which the former Engagements did presuppose: but now this presupposall failing without our guilt, and by their own miscarriages against the Common-wealth, all the Engagements by which we were bound unto them, are *ipso facto*, made void; and our present Engagement to the Common-wealth, and Parliament therein is still the same which it was; nor could any Covenant or

*The Repropo-
sals to the 5.
Sect. of the
Proposals re-
lating to mat-
ters of offence
and scandall.*

Oath ever after it, nor did any of us ever intend to infringe it. Therefore we shall further re-propose unto these Proposers almost in their own words, that these things being thus considered (as we conceive them to be truths clear and unquestionable to all rationally mens capacities) in the nature of this Engagement; and in the full relation wherein it stands to former Engagements, cannot in our judgements minister the least matter of scandall or offence to any man whatsoever, either good or bad: who although they are not able to make, or happily so much as to understand subtile distinctions, (for we make none, nor need we to seek for any) whereby guilt may either be evaded or palliated; yet we hardly can imagine, that any will be so irrationally and unconscionably injurious to us, as to look upon us, as breakers of our oaths and covenants in this case; or as prevaricators of the most sacred and solempne things; or as men of ductile spirits unto evil; (for to be ductile to our duty is our glory) or of prostituted consciences, or led by Principles of fear or interest; which prejudices (seeing it cannot be denied, that they are only founded upon the ignorance and mistakes of some men; and upon the malicious informations and wrongfull suggestions of others, and not upon any solid or just reasons: therefore they) do grossly wound the Gospell; and such as raile at us, or putt us up to be persecuted; and proclaime us to be perjured; wrong us their innocent brethren, and expose our Ministry to scorn, (the honour whereof ought to be dearer to us then our lives) endanger the reputation, and so weaken the power of it in the conscience of our hearers (who in these times of distraction are soon perswaded to have low thoughts of their Ministers; chiefly when Ministers themselves study to make one another contemptible) as that it needs must be believed, that both Christ, and the State also, will be greater losers by their disorderly carriage against the subscribers of the Engagement then either they, or any body else, can be gainers by their non-scribing of it.

We shall desire alwayes with our Brethren, and we hope no lesse then they, to keep in mind the noble resolution of the Apostle; who would not in case of scandall use his own just power, but chose freely to suffer all outward inconveniences to himselfe, rather then to hinder the Gospell of Christ; concluding that it

was better for him to die, then that any in that behalf should make his glorying void: but he never chose to neglect any part of a necessary Duty, for fear of any Kings or Lords displeasure; or for the apprehension of any unjust reproaches, to be cast upon himself by other men: although perhaps Brethren, he was resolved, and did conclude in this case, to go through evil and good report, and rather to suffer bonds & death, then not to proceed in the work of his calling according to his Conscience: nor could any combination of few or of many brethren together, take him off from such a resolution; although otherwise in matters free to be done, or to be left undone as might tend to edification, he was of a most ductile spirit, and of a most facile and yielding disposition: 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20. 21. 22.

Alf. 20. v. 23. 24. & ch. 21. v. 11, 12, 13. Alf. 21. v. 20, till 27.

We shall therefore again say with the Proposers in our Case; that upon these and such like grounds purely conscientious, and not out of any private interest or design; but for the manifestation of our affection towards the peace of this Common-wealth we were not necessitated to forbear; but were free to yield obedience to the Subscription, which was required of us. And although now we need not for our own satisfaction, to desire any debate about the Engagement; yet if any shall desire a friendly conference with us about the same, we shall no manner of way decline it; but rather further it on our parts, that it may be rightly ordered unto edification.

And to the grounds of conscience,

And to the motion of a Treatise.

As concerning the ensnaring Oaths, and Subscriptions offered by former Governours; we truly desire they may be duly considered, and that the just judgement of God brought upon those, who without respect to tender Consciences did presse them, and lay them as stumbling blocks before their Brethren, may be apprehended and feared; but we conceive, that the requiring of a generall promise from Subjects, to performe an undeniable and unquestionable Duty to the Communalty wherein they live by these that have the power of affording, or refusing Civill protection to them, is, not of the same nature with those former Oaths and Subscriptions, which former Governours did require; for the former did relate unto matters of Religious concernment; and not unto matters meerly Civill, as this latter

Re-proposal is to the 6. Self relating to ensnaring Oaths.

doth; and then it is one thing, to seek advantages against those whom we would entrap: (which was the Episcopall designe in their Canons) and another thing, to lay the foundation of mutuall trust and confidence, between those that are to make up one Body Politick together; For ~~this~~ subscription doth tend to nothing in it self, but this: so we are confident: that it is not proposed to any other end. Therefore we are full of hope, that none will smart for it; but such as are wilfull disturbers of the publick Peace and Safety: and that none may be found in such a Categorie, our work shall be to gaine all unto their Duties, by a clear conviction of their understanding concerning the Truth; and faithfulness which they owe to the Publick: nor shall we delight to make any odious, for not subscribing towards those that are in Authority, as we are made odious towards the multitude for discharging our conscience in subscribing; but we shall rather condole with such, as conscionably abstaine from subscribing; being grieved, that by their own default in Duty, or weakness, they should be cast upon the sad Dilemma, either to be lyable to the displeasure and just jealousy of their Superiours; or to be under the trouble of their own Spirits; which the fear as well of sinning, as of chusing affliction doth bring unto men of Conscience and ingenuity: and that these inconveniences may be avoided, we shall on the one hand pray and intercede for them; that the many yeares experience of their quiet behaviour and faithfull services, may be accepted towards a just degree of security, and assurance for future peaceableness: and on the other hand, we shall also exhort and intreat, that as none should subscribe fainedly to the profession of their duty: so all may do it sincerely; but especially such, as hitherto have been faithfull to the Cause; and amongst all these most chiefly, such as stand piously for the Testimony of *Jesus*, either in the Classicall or Congregational Ministry: lest through their failing in this kind, some that watch for advantages against the Office of the Ministry it self; and from their least haltings, make use of opportunities, to powre contempt upon the function; may not see their hearts desire brought to passe against them.

Thus then we, who at present, upon these considerations to our Consciences satisfactory; and before all men justifiable, are
free

*Re-proposal
to the 7. Sect.
relating to
tender con-
sciences.*

*And to the
way of secu-
rity for
peaceableness.*

steeto subscribe the Engagement as our Duty; do lovingly, as Brethren, beseech those that subscribe it not, nor to censure or asperse us (whose reputation is as necessary for others as a good Conscience for our selves) to be men that draw reproach upon Religion; and vilifie the reputation of the Ministry, by which the service of *Jesus Christ* is advanced; nor cause others to think of us, that we esteeme Oaths as changeable as Opinions, and so brand us with the odious marks of equivocation and prevarication, nor to subject us unto the contempt and hate of all, as men of loose and uncertain principles; and we shall endeavour (so far as God shall give us favour with our Superiours) to procure to them, the grant of their equitable desires; that none of them may be out-lawed, untill by wilfull violation of the Lawes they deprive themselves of the protection, and forfeit the benefit thereof; which we should be exceeding sorry for their and the Gospels sake, to perceive in any of them.

*Re-proposal
to the 8. Sect.
concluding
the whole
matter.*

SECT. VI.

*What course may be taken to give these Scruplers
full satisfaction.*

IN the fore-going Section, the subscribers have apologized for themselves; and I have said in their Name, that which I am perswaded all may, and most will assent unto; to wipe off the *odium*, and foul aspersions which are cast upon them for their forwardnesse to do their duty. Now I shall humbly offer something further, towards the satisfaction of these Scruplers; that if the Re-proposals of the Subscribers, clear not their doubts sufficiently; some other Overtures may not be wanting to ease them of the same, and induce them to the performance of their Duty.

If then, in Charity to them whom I esteem brethren, and in Prudency to our selves, for the preservation of publick Peace, by some mutuall assurance of fidelity between fellow-Subjects; it is expedient to think upon some satisfactory course, how to prevent further divisions, and heale (if it be possible) our breaches.

*Why a course
of satisfacti-
on is to be
left aimed at.*

lest the Common enemy both of Religion and Liberty, get his fit opportunity, by co-operating with our failings, to set us a-work to destroy each other, who together have co-operated hitherto in the common cause of Reformation, and just liberty; If (I say) this be expedient to be thought upon, I would humbly suggest, towards the removing of these Scruples; whether conscientiously by single-hearted Brethren, or politically by some others who have double designs entertained; these ensuing Motions.

*To satisfy
scruplers, all
their scruples
must be first
known.*

1. Because no man can possibly receive full satisfaction in any thing, except he will uncase himself that all his doubtings may be known to those that sincerely study his content; therefore our Brethren who make these Proposals are to be intreated to declare; whether yea or no these be all the scruples, which they have against the Subscription to the Engagement; So that if these be removed, nothing will further hinder their Subscription?

*Then they
themselves
should de-
clare their
sense of that
which may
give them
satisfaction.*

2. If these are all their scruples, and that nothing is further desired but the removall thereof, then our Brethren are in the next place to be intreated further to declare; whether they have in their eye any way of clearing these doubts, by which they conceive (as knowing themselves best) their satisfaction if it were followed might arise, and wherein their Conscience would acquiesce? As for example, whether a well-ordered Treaty, to remove mis-understandings, and to determine, by known principles, matters of duty, will do it yea or no? or whether they conceive that nothing will satisfy their doubtings, and embolden them to subscribe, but either such a Declaration to be made by the supream power, upon the Engagement, as they shall rest contented in; or else such a liberty to put in their own cautions, their limitations of performance, and their interpretation of the sense wherein they take it; that in a manner they shall have their own will wholly, without yielding any thing at all to the will of their Superiours, to give them satisfaction?

If they will not answer any of these *Quæres*, but will keep a hidden reserve of doubts; or if nothing but one of the two last Proposals, will be esteemed satisfactory: then it is evident, that in the Proposers aime there is no sincerity; for although they
seeme

seeme by their Proposals, to seeke satisfaction to themselves and what to be a way of agreement with others; yet because they manifestly judged of the obstruct all the rational meanes of clearing their own doubts; and scruples, in refuse to deale ingenuously towards the obtaining of an equitable satisfaction from others, in that wherein they pretend to be not declare themselves to be scrupled, it may justly be concluded, that these scruples are one the matters ly proposed to colour a wilfull resolution of non-subscribing, forementioned and of standing at a distance from under the present power; and that consequently there is some further designe in hand as to State-affaires, tending to a future breach; which how becoming it may be to the humility and piety of such as are called learned and pious Divines, to have a hand in, and what Conscience it will be in them to cover it with the mask of tenderness of Conscience; I shall leave to the judgement of all single-hearted Christians to determine.

It is a sad thing to consider, how far some men, who want not parts; and who undoubtably are truly Godly for the main; are led sometimes (in the agitation of the affaires, wherein a party which they do affect is interessed), away from the simplicity of the Gospel to play the Politicians, and it is neither well credible to others, nor at all discernable by themselves; how far when once they begin to warpe from the way of Christian simplicity, How it comes and pure love to their duty; the motions of their own passion; to passe that the plots of other men; and the desires of opposition against some Mini- those whom they dis-affect, will insinuate themselves into their sters play the very Consciences, under the pretence of piety and zealousness State-men. for Religion; which they falsely first imagine to be the cause they have in hand, and then in favour of this imagination they rashly licenciate themselves unto many things; whereof in the day of their account they will be troubled to find a justifiable acquittance.

But supposing as I ought to do, that in these Proposers there scruples be is nothing under the deck; but that in this modest and discreet plain dealing way, the plaine truth and all the truth of their grievances, at men, what the subscription is represented above board; I shall now point ought to be at the means, which in a faire Treatie, I conceive may produce their behea- unto them so much satisfaction, as in enquiry they can desire; vicour in re- That they may have cause to deale ingenuously, either by accep- ference to a ting Treaty.

ting of that which is offered, if it may be procured; or by excepting against it; if it seem not satisfactory; in which last case, I think it would be fair dealing in them, not only to alleadge their reasons, why they are not satisfied with what shall be offered; but also to make their own demands, wherein at least they will rest satisfied; for to lye only at the word of excepting, is an unreasonable posture in treating between two equals, when both are alike concerned in a matter of difference, far more then it is unreasonable when Subjects by a Treaty make their application toward Superiours, and seek to gaine the favour of some equitable satisfaction from them in a matter of such concernment; which imports no lesse then either the losse or the assurance of all their outward protection and safety.

And seeing to stand alwayes on the excepting, and not at all on the offering or accepting hand, is a frame of spirit not onely unfriendly amongst the Members of the same Communality, but altogether unfutable to the profession of Christianity; and also most of all unbecoming the worke of the Ministry, and unproportionate to the wayes of peace and mutuall confidence amongst brethren; therefore, I shall not be so injurious as to suspect any of them of any unwillingnesse to treat in a faire way; nor shall I imagine, that any sinitrous designe is haiched by the matter, and the proposing of these Proposals in the mind of a discontented party, to strengthen the captions, carping, peevish, and excepting humour of the times. I say, I shall not suspect any such thing, although to a jealous eye; the matter thereof compared with the aime therein, and the covered close way of dispersing the same amongst the doubtfull multitude; and at a time whiles petitions to gaine delayes, and respit for further resolutions, are presented to Superiours, may look somewhat suspiciously. Yet (I say) for all this I shall not suspect that any designe contrary to peaceablenesse, is somented thereby in the affections of any: nor shall I wish, that upon the appearance of such a cause of jealousy any strictnesse should be used in the settlement of this businesse; But I shall rather pray, perswade and exhort, that on both sides, the open carriage of all matters, as in the presence of God, may take away or prevent as well the appearance of subtile contrivances on the one hand, as the surmises thereof

thereof on the other: for both these equally blast the hopes of unity, and the grounds of amiable confidence in all men who are at a distance one from another; for which cause I shall be a most humble supor towards all sides, that on all hands, not only a friendly Treaty may be set afoot, and chearfully assented unto; but that while matters of just scruple are taken into consideration, therein to be resolved by known and predetermined rules; the matters of clear duty in the interim may not be suspended or intermitted on either sides, because all our danger lies in the neglect of common known duties, more then in any thing else: for if we would but do that which we confesse we ought to do, and which we wish others would do to us; there would be no doubt a speedy healing of our breaches: nor can there any good reason be given why I should suspend to act a known duty in that wherein I am not scrupled, because I ought to be left free to abstain from acting in that wherein I am scrupled: that which in Christianity is clear and positive, is alwayes to be intended before that which is dark and negative: nor may I with a good conscience, refuse to follow the light which I have in the main of a duty, so far as it is practicable; because I want some light in some circumstantial cases, which may fall in, as to me, to be unpracticable. If therefore this ground can be laid and assented unto, that whatever we shall agree upon to be a clear and undeniable duty in Christianity or Morality, shall be practised for it selfe, notwithstanding all other differences or defects falling in among us, and that in the disquisition of matters we shall proceed alwayes first to determine that wherein we fully agree, before we mention matters of disagreement; I am confident that we shall finde so much cause of satisfaction and assurance in each others resolutions and engagements of that kind, that the different apprehensions of matters which now seem extreme; and through our mutuall mistrustings of each other, are like to be the utter ruine of both, will be found very inconsiderable, and such as will be wholly swallowed up by the grounds of mutuall assurance which naturally results from every faithful Engagement, to practise things wherein there is a full agreement between parties; for the not doing (as I said before) of that which in our places we should do with singleness of heart,

Why matters of duty should not be suspended but effectually intended during a Treaty, and notwithstanding some differences.

ms. 12. 21.

without contradicting and contesting one with another, about that wherein we suspect each other (as aiming at that which we should not do) is the Originall and great cause of all our distraction and unsettlement; which if we could intend to redresse and remove (*viz.* by overcoming evil with good; that is, the feares of evill designs and enterprizes, with good motions and engagements unto unquestionable duties) there is no doubt but we should find a cleare way to Peace and reconcilement: this therefore is the course, which I would suggest to be followed, between those that are scrupled at the Engagement, and those that are not scrupled at it, in their friendly conference and Treatie.

that things

would be

handled in

the Treatie,

and in what

order, if we

deale with

men of inge-

nuity.

First let matters of agreement be proposed, understood and ratified, in things Positive and Negative.

Secondly, Let there be a professed Engagement, to practise that which is answerable unto their Agreements, and tending undoubtedly to edification between them.

Thirdly, Let matters of disagreement both positive and negative be thought upon with these two cautions premised to prevent a breach.

First, That no disagreement in Judgement or practise, shall make void the Dutifull Engagement, to follow joyntly the matters of Agreement.

Secondly, That to take away the offences, which may arise upon the differences of opinions and practises, some Rules are to be pre-determined; whereby contentious debates about the same may be prevented, and whereby the right use of Christian, of Morall and of Rationall freedom therein may be settled.

If therefore those Pious and Learned Brethren, whose scruples against the Engagement, being thus proposed, have a great influence upon the minds of others, to make them scrupulous and disaffected at it: if (I say) they would condescend to the Overture of such a Treatie, (which hitherto some have not been willing to do) I am very confident through the blessing of Christ, that an Expedient would easily be found to settle their doubtfull thoughts; and so to make all others willing to yield unto their Superiours,

that

that ground of just assurance and acquiescence, for which the Engagement by them proposed, is requisite.

And this is the course, by which those that are ingenuous may receive satisfaction, if they seek it as they ought; but if any doth scruple more through Policy than Pietie, this course will not be liked of, because it will crosse their design; which is, to keepe the minds of the weaker sort in a staggering condition, that they may not close to any settlement; but lye open to all manner of changes: I shall not charge any of the Authors of these Proposals with any such designe; yet I cannot absolve all of them from it; for I may as lawfully suspect them in this matter as in any other matter I may do mine own heart, whereof although I know none evil; yet I shall do my self no injury, to say, that yet there may be some mixture of deceitfulness in it, when I thinke my meaning is at the best; For the Apostle himself would not take upon him to justifie himself in all things. I know (saith he) nothing by myself, yet I am not thereby justified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. So I may without offence say, of the Proposers of these scruples, that although I know nothing by them, but judge charitably that their scruples as to them are truly conscientious, yet I must also say, that thereby they are not justified from the mixture of collaterall designes; but that it is the Lord who will judge them. The maine of the businesse may be truly a doubt of Conscience; and yet the managing of it, in the hands of some may be somewhat else; nor do I wrong the Christian Charity which I owe to all or any of them in this; because it is lawfull for me to be jealous over them with godly jealousy lest by any meanes, as the Serpent beguiled Eve by his subtilty: so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. And truly to look but upon the matter it self, by comparing the former and latter parts of the proposals together, a doubt may be made thus; that seeing the maine scruple whereat they stick, is not so much against the Duty expressed in the words of the Engagement; which is, to be true and faithfull, or against the Object of the Duty considered in it self, which is this Commonwealth; or against the immediate qualifications of the Object and of the Duty; which are, as it is now established without a King and House of Lords, which are acknowledged to be the effects of Gods Providence; but onely against the act of subscribing to the

whole, in reference to some State-considerations and consequences following thereupon; which tend to nothing else, but to suspend the minds of men, and take them off from the regular performance of a present Duty, by the conjectural apprehensions of doubtfull inconveniences which may ensue as to the State. Therefore it is not without a rationall ground of jealousy; that although the matters proposed, may be reall scruples of Conscience, and rationally reflected upon by some without prejudice; yet that in this proposing of them, as to the disposition of the matter, to fetch about this form of speech, the hand of *Jeab* may also have been in it, for some selfe-interest of State.

2 Sam.
14. 19.

And this may be thought the more likely to be true, if we observe two things. First, that the words of this Engagement (which are scrupled at, and said to be contrary to former Engagements, and the duties mentioned in the second *Self*.) are not at all once alleadged; to shew distinctly, wherein the mentioned contrariety doth stand; but the objection is made confusedly against the Act of subscribing to the words, according to that prejudice which the vulgar hath taken up against them in a generall notion. Herein then the subtilty of the Policy doth lye: that the matter should be couched in such a way, as doth most commodiously favour that notion, and strengthen it; which in men of learning, conscience and piety, seeking a clearing of doubts, doth not seem to be faire and plaine dealing, and therefore may be thought to have somewhat of a Collaterall designe.

Secondly, we may observe also, that if the thing clearly professed in the second *Self* of the Proposals to be a known duty, had been really intended, and resolved upon to have been practised at this time no less then in generall termes acknowledged to be a thing at some time lawfully practicable; there would not have been any inclination to do two things which here are done; not without some contrivance. First, the performance of duties confessed to be due to such Superiours, as are in places over us, and by a people in our case under them, would not have been *per indirectum* denied to be due by us unto them. Secondly, the words of the Engagement upon which the whole stresse of the scruple is said to lye; and for which that which is confessed to be due to others is denied to our Superiour Powers, would

not

not have been suppressed, and left in the dark as they are; but clearly mentioned and alledged as they are not, lest the fallacy of the pretended scruple should appear. For if the duty acknowledged in *These*, had been applied to the *Hypothesis* of our present condition, and the duty required in the words of the Engagement had been compared therewith, the pretended matter of scruple, would by the full agreement of the one with the other, have been found apparently impertinent: but it may be conceived, that the matter is laid thus before the pre-pollessed Reader, or weak discerner of such contrivances; to the end, that upon a full acknowledgement of a just duty, and a willingness to perform the same, in a case like to ours, the iniquity of that which is supposed to be required of us, by the Engagement; may be heightened in mens apprehensions, who are easily swayed to receive the worst impressions of those that are in places of power over them: by how much then they seem to yield to a rationall duty, and be of an equitable disposition towards their Superiours, by so much they prevaricate against the intention of the Engagement to make it to be thought altogether contrary to reason and to justice; by a slye concealing of the words, and a suspitious interpretation thereof, suggested, as containing matters very far different from the acknowledged duty, and wholly opposite to former Engagements. Whereas in truth and deed, there is no such thing aimed at by the Engagement, nor implied in the words thereof. So that from the third paragraphe of the Proposals to the end thereof; the whole matter and contrivance of the discourse may be thought (and yet without doing injury to the Authours) nothing else but a Politicall Stratagem and Sophisme grounded upon the mis-application and mis-interpretation of the Engagement and Covenant, to entangle weak and undiscerning consciences; and to keep up the spirit of dissension in the mindes of the multitude under the pretence of call Scruples of that kind. *And how*

The thing then to be offered to obviate the deceit of this politicall contrivance of the businessse, and to give satisfaction (if it can be admitted) to this politicall scrupulosity of conscience is of this nature this: that the words of the Engagement in their plain sense; are to be satisfied in the second *Sect*, they confesse to be conformant with the will generall,

of God, with the light of nature, with the judgement of the Learned, with the practise of former Christians, and with their own principles and former Engagements: and then if the Duty mentioned in the Engagement doth run wholly parallel, as the case now stands with us, to that which they yield to be a Duty as they State the case in generall themselves; then they should be made to reflect upon themselves, that they ought to be satisfied in this; that by taking the Engagement, nothing is farther required of them then what they proclaim themselves, to be a performable duty in such a case. But if their Politicall contemplations of the meaning of the Engagement, through the sinister prospectives & jealousies which they take up, and foment against their Superiours, by an uncharitable mis-construction of their aimes; will not suffer them to acquiesce in this parallelisme of the Engagement, with what they acknowledge to be lawfull; then a further course may be taken, and shall be offered unto them, if they will intend to bring matters to a faire tryall and issue, and that is this: that the consequences, which they say are implied in the words of the Engagement, may be taken into con-

And also in consideration and, examined in three respects.

First, How far the words of the Engagement, do import in the ordinary acception by an indifferent Judge, any such matters, as they say are implied therein.

Secondly, How far, if the words should import any such matters in any sense, the performance of the Engagement in that sense, is agreeable with the Duties mentioned by themselves in the 2. Sect. performable by Subjects towards their Superiours, in the case they are supposed and wherein now we are.

Thirdly, How far the Covenant and former Engagements, will be contradictory or not contradictory to this Engagement, although the consequences here said to be implied therein, should be granted to follow thereon.

In all which matters, if upon known grounds and principles of Christianity and Rationality, a regular way of disquiry may be followed, as it becometh Divines within their bounds, in reference to Conscience, modestly, and not as it becometh Statesmen, in reference to interests, suspiciously, and if they will engage to stand or fall to the issue of that disquiry; I dare in the fear of God, undertake to let them see satisfactory grounds, whereby

whereby their scruples will be cleared, and wherein consequently their Consciences ought to acquiesce, if they will not subordinate the inclinations thereof, to an affected scrupulosity for the love of a party. For that all this contrivance of the Proposals, is like unto the hand of *Jacob* in the mouth of the woman of *Tekoh*; to bring about a desigae, rather then to receive a single-hearted satisfaction for themselves; is neither irrational to think, nor uncharitable to say, but just and equitable in prudence to suspect: and here we have a clear example of a smooth and handsome conveyance of a State-business, under a ministerial cloak and pretence of Religiousness, not in, but out of the Pulpit; which is one of the things which in another larger Treatise, I have shewed to be one of the main causes of our present distempers and confusions; namely, when Ministers meddle with State-matters, either in their Pulpits as were authoritatively, or out of the same more subtilly in such a way, and to such a purpose as this; therefore to rectifie the fundamentall-error of the aime and design of these Proposals, as to State-Matters, let me referre the ingenious Reader, but especially these Learned and Pious Divines, to an unprejudicat perusall of that Treatise; wherein if any shall shew me, that I have wronged the profession, or unjustly taxed the practise of some, or mistaken my way in seeking Peace & Truth, to heale our present breaches; I shall professe my self to be very much beholding to him. Upon this whole matter then I shall professe thus much; that although I thus trace in the Spirits of these Proposers by the matter and contrivance of their Proposals such an inclination to meddle in State-affairs, which is unsutable to their Calling; yet that I have no prejudice against them in my heart for so doing, nor do I intend, to fasten upon them any charge of false and fained pretences of being scrupled, otherwise then indeed they are (for I believe truly that they are thus scrupled, and puzzeled in Conscience about their own imaginations concerning State-matters, rather through weaknesse and custome, and want of a Rule to discern the motions of their own spirits, then through any set aime, to take upon them the management of State-Matters) but I look upon them, as the frame of their thoughts represents it self and them by their way unto me; whereof I have discovered the Rationality, the Christianity and the Policie, to shew, that in all respects

2 Sam. 14:

satisfaction

satisfaction may be given them, if they desire it ingenuously; and that if their spirit by the deceitfulness of error is led forth unadvisedly, in another way then they ought to walk in, that that also can be discovered; for there is nothing hid but it shall be revealed: and being revealed, a Rule may be found to rectify whatever is amiss therein. I shall therefore for mine own part, not refuse (if they will needs insist upon their Politicall scruple, and thinke that their Consciences ought to be engaged, into those State-considerations) to deale with them upon their inferences from the words of the Engagement, which is their own Weapon onely with this caution; that we shall not take upon us to become such absolute Judges, of the wayes of those that are in places of Magistracy, as to make our own interpretation of their wayes a Rule of all obedientiall dutifulnes in our selves or other Subjects, to bind thereunto as to a Law, our Conscience above Christianity and Morality; and that in speaking of the actions and intentions of Superiours we shall be no lesse charitable to them, then we would have others to be to us, or we should be to other men ruling in another place, in such occurrences of publick affairs, with this proviso, their scruples even upon such Politicall contemplations as they meddle withall, shall, if they please, be taken into consideration; although we shall be in very great danger to go beyond the line of our Calling, and every foot to go out of our way; which my chief study is in all these agitations of matters by known Rules to prevent: which the Lord direct us by the light of his countenance, not onely to intend, but also to do, to the advancement of his glory, and our mutuall comfort in the way of Righteousness, Amen.

F I N I S.

The PRINTER to the READER.

The Treatise mentioned by the Author a little before the ending of this Discourse, is a large disquisition of the Rules, by which all debates amongst Christians in generall, may be agitated without offence; and by which in particular, our present controversies may be composed, by a full discovery of the duties of Magistrates and Ministers towards the publick, and to each other in our present distracting occasions, wherein few men study a Rule; but almost all are carried by meer interests. Printed for Rich. Woodenothe, at the sign of the Starre under Peters Church in Cornhill, 1650.

satisfaction may be given them, if they desire it ingenuously; and that if their spirit by the deceitfulness of error is led forth unadvisedly, in another way then they ought to walk in, that that also can be discovered; for there is nothing hid but it shall be revealed: and being revealed, a Rule may be found to rectifie whatever is amisse therein. I shall therefore for mine own part, not refuse (if they will needs insist upon their Politicall scruple, and thinke that their Consciences ought to be engaged, into those State-considerations) to deale with them upon their inferences from the words of the Engagement, which is their own Weapon onely with this caution; that we shall not take upon us to become such absolute Judges, of the wayes of those that are in places of Magistracy, as to make our own interpretation of their wayes a Rule of all obedientiall dutifulnes in our selves or other Subjects, to bind thereunto as to a Law, our Conscience above Christianity and Morality; and that in speaking of the actions and intentions of Superiours we shall be no lesse charitable to them, then we would have others to be to us, or we should be to other men ruling in another place, in such occurrences of publick affairs, with this proviso, their scruples even upon such Politicall contemplations as they meddle withall, shall, if they please, be taken into consideration; although we shall be in very great danger to go beyond the line of our Calling, and every foot to go out of our way; which my chief study is in all these agitations of matters by known Rules to prevent: which the Lord direct us by the light of his countenance, not onely to intend, but also to do, to the advancement of his glory, and our mutuall comfort in the way of Righteousness, Amen.

F I N I S.

The PRINTER to the READER.

The Treatise mentioned by the Author a little before the ending of this Discourse, is a large disquisition of the Rules, by which all debates amongst Christians in generall, may be agitated without offence; and by which in particular, our present controversies may be composed, by a full discovery of the duties of Magistrates and Ministers towards the publick, and to each other in our present distracting occasions, wherein few men study a Rule; but almost all are carried by secret interests. Printed for Rich. Woodenothe, at the sign of the Scarre under Peters Church in Cornhill, 1650.

